DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Ninan Eipe, the first point that you dealt with was the question of the creation of an agricultural board to advise the *punja* cultivators. It is a difficult matter. The committee that was convened to consider the matter did not think it advisable to levy a cess of more than one chackram per acre. The local officers considered that inadequate—as a matter of fact it is wholly inadequate ; the cess would be very high if a committee is to be appointed. Therefore, the Government were reluctantly compelled to abandon the idea of a committee.

Then you dealt with the question of lime-shell collection. You may know that, as a result of a resolution in the Legislative Council, the Government accepted the views of the Council that the contract system should be abolished and that everybody should have access to collect shells lying in the back-waters or in the sea free of charge.

The Agricultural Commission that you require is a very big matter ; and besides, we have to wait and see the results of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in British India.

50. Agricultural Department.

MR. SADASIVAN PILLAI SIVARAMALINGAM PILLAI (*Member, Agastisvaram taluk*) said that, agriculture being the main occupation of the people of Nanjinad, it was the duty of the Government to see that all possible facilities were afforded for developing it. Sufficient quantities of leaf and other manures and water were not available for all the ryots, and there were no lands for growing leaf manure or for grazing the cattle. On account of restrictions, grazing within the reserves could not also be resorted to. Failure of crops had been caused several times by scarcity of water or by floods. One of the reasons was that many of the old irrigation tanks had been sold in auction and the few tanks that remained as *porambokes* were not maintained properly. There were thus not enough tanks for the collection of rain water. No more tank-beds in Nanjinad should therefore be sold in auction.

Although the Government had passed rules for the grant of agricultural loans it was not easy for all to get loans at the proper time for the purchase of manure seeds, etc. Instructions should, therefore, be issued to the Land Revenue Commissioner for the prompt disbursement of loans. The member suggested also that the grant of loans might be entrusted to the Agricultural Department.

The area under paddy cultivation was increasing year by year and the need for manure was also proportionately increasing. The poor ryots were not able to purchase imported manure. Arrangements should therefore be made for the conservation of local manure such as fish, bones and *punnac*. There were not adequate facilities for the ryots for purchasing manure from manure depôts and agents. It would be advantageous if arrangements were made for the sale of manure both on credit and for cash through co-operative societies.

The major and minor irrigation tanks were in disrepair and should be restored in order to avoid, on the one hand, floods during rainy weather and on the other, scarcity of water during the summer season. A fixed allotment for the restoration of tanks should be provided every year and the further sale of tank-beds stopped. It would also be advisable to appoint a committee for tank restoration work as in British India.

The existing bridge near the Putrakulam sluice at the 13th mile of the N. P. channel was too small to allow the free passage of water underneath during the rainy season. Consequently, breaches occurred near it and the surrounding places were inundated during the past two years. To prevent such damage in future, a new bridge resting on larger arches should be built. The member was aware that estimates for the work had already been prepared, and requested that it might be carried out without delay.

The Champakulam scheme on the Krishnanputtur *kal* should be taken in hand and completed early. That scheme would benefit an extent of about 2,000 acres of wet and about 8,000 acres of garden lands and would, moreover, bring in an additional revenue of about Rs. 15,000 every year.

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In order to collect the rain water flowing from the Marutvamalai and other places and thereby benefit the ryots of the Tovala channel, western branch, a reservoir should be opened at a place north of Marutvamalai.

The water conveyed by the Tovala channel was insufficient to meet the demand of the lands commanded by it and there was scarcity of water for the lands at its lower reaches. Some lands had to lie fallow and on others only one crop could often be raised. The full tax due on the lands was nevertheless recovered from the ryots. That was not fair. Only the tax leviable for single crop lands should be recovered; or in the alternative, the extension of the Alatturaiar, investigated two or three years ago, should be completed at an early date.

The member stated that, during the current year, water was allowed to the wet lands at the tail end of the Tovala channel only once in a week as in the case of garden lands. It caused real grievance to the ryots and it should be redressed soon. It would be advantageous if the whole work of distribution of water from the Tovala channel were entrusted to a single Section Officer of the P. W. Department.

Lastly, the Puttanar should be widened. The work of widening the river had been carried out only as far as the Athamuzhi escape. Breaches would be prevented only if the whole length was widened.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Sivaramalingam Pillai, in regard to agricultural loans, after very careful consideration and consulting their officers, the Government have come to the conclusion that the Revenue Department is the one that has the best facilities for deciding upon the loans. The Agricultural Department cannot know anything about a man's worth, his prospect and means, but the Revenue Department, with its Tahsildars and *Provertikars*, is the best to decide the matter.

Then you come to manures. I quite agree with you that manures, as much as possible, should be utilised in the State. As you know, one of the principal manures and a very important one, is dried prawns, large quantities of which are being exported from Travancore. The Government have recently increased the duty on prawns and let us hope that that will be sufficient. The export of *punnac* is already falling off which shows that more of it is being used in the country.

Another point is about a bridge at Puttanar. An estimate has been prepared and is now being examined by the Chief Engineer.

In regard to the Champakulam scheme on the Krishnnaputtur *kal*, the Chief Engineer has received an estimate for the improvement of that and he is examining that estimate.

Also, the Chief Engineer has completed his investigations and is scrutinizing an estimate for the extension of the Alatturaiar, about which also you spoke.

Then as regards widening the Puttanar, the first two reaches have been improved and an estimate for improving the third reach is under preparation. The Chief Engineer says that the work will be taken up soon after the necessary estimate has been sanctioned.

The member said that the Irrigation Block Board had recommended the work.

DEWAN: An estimate has been called for.

The member urged that agricultural loans should be issued on the security of other cultivators and not based entirely on the report of the Revenue Department.

DEWAN: That will be considered.

The member urged that the export of *punnac* should be prohibited.

DEWAN: It cannot be done now.

The member said that the banks of the Pazhayar were breached in many places and that at twelve places the sluices were out of order.

DEWAN: The Chief Engineer will consider this.

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